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REDUCING LIVESTOCK LOSSES

from

Sneezeweed
POISONING

in the
Western States



PA-329

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Sneezeweed POISONING

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Animals that feed on sneezeweed may become affected with the "spewing sickness." The disease is so named because of its most characteristic symptom—chronic vomiting, or spewing.

Sheep are frequently poisoned by sneezeweed, and cattle are only occasionally poisoned. The animals eat sneezeweed during the summer and fall, when other forage is scarce or has become less palatable.

Two species of sneezeweed are especially poisonous to livestock.

Orange sneezeweed,¹ which is found from western Montana and eastern Oregon southward to California and New Mexico, poisons sheep on the summer ranges of the intermountain region. Common sneezeweed² causes livestock losses in the Eastern States.

All plant parts are poisonous. The poisonous substance, believed to be dugalin, has a cumulative effect; an animal may die if it repeatedly eats small quantities of the plant over a long period.

Where and When It Grows

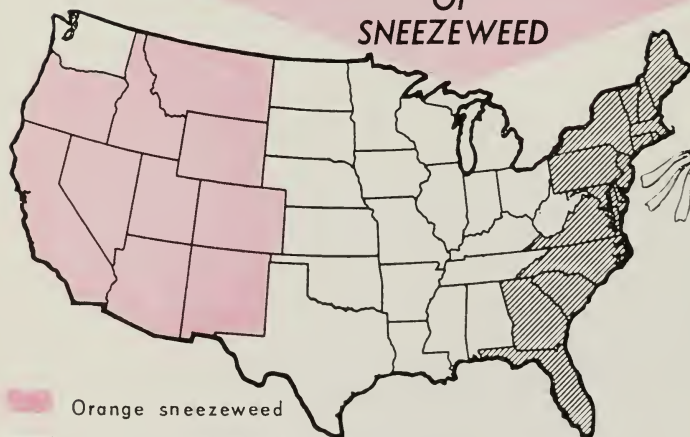
Orange sneezeweed grows at 5,000- to 12,000-foot elevations on moist slopes and in well-drained meadows. Common sneezeweed is

found in wet areas and near streams. Both species start growth in early spring and mature in the summer and early fall.

¹ *Helenium hoopesii*.

² *H. autumnale*.

DISTRIBUTION OF SNEEZEWEED



Orange sneezeweed

Common sneezeweed





TN-17

Sneezeweed has one or several stems that grow 1 to 3 feet high. The leaves are alternate, lance shaped, and have a smooth edge. The flowers grow in clusters. They are orange colored and have dark-orange centers. A plant often develops a large crown, and is spread vegetatively by this crown. The plant is a perennial and belongs to the sunflower family.

How It Affects Livestock

About 2 pounds of sneezeweed leaves eaten daily by an animal for 20 days may produce poisoning and death.

Some animals may die within a

few days after the first symptoms appear. Others become chronic cases, and may live for weeks or months. Complete recovery from poisoning seldom occurs.

Symptoms of sneezeweed poisoning

1. Depression
2. Weakness
3. Irregular pulse
4. Frothing at the mouth
5. Coughing
6. Chronic vomiting or spewing
7. Bloating

How To Reduce Livestock Losses

Livestock owners can reduce losses by following these range and livestock-management practices: (1) Keep livestock away from dense patches. (2) Keep them off sneezeweed ranges until adequate forage is available. (3) Remove sheep from sneezeweed ranges when other plants begin to dry. (4) Practice open herding and allow animals free movement. (5) Use

bedgrounds for one night only, and make sure that they are free of sneezeweed. (6) Employ a good herder.

There is no effective treatment for sneezeweed poisoning, and eradication of the plant in large areas is not practicable. Small patches may be eliminated by grubbing, or by treating the plants with a herbicide, such as 2,4,5-T.

Where To Obtain More Information

You can obtain more information on sneezeweed poisoning by getting in touch with your county agricultural agent or by writing to your State agricultural experiment station or to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Consult your local

veterinarian if you have any questions regarding affected animals. *Note:* The map on page 2 shows areas where most livestock poisoning has been reported. It is possible that sneezeweed grows in other areas.

Know Poisonous Plants • Reduce Livestock Losses

Prepared by the Animal Disease and Parasite Research Division, Agricultural Research Service. Acknowledgment is made to the staff of the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station.

Washington, D. C.

☆ 421084 U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1958

Issued April 1958